

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

MAY - 8 2007

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Patrick Rump

Shanté Austin, Casey Guillebeau, and Janisa Francis (left to right) transplanting native seedlings at the Candlestick Community Garden Nursery.

Bay Youth Help Turn the Tides at Yosemite Slough

Along San Francisco's disregarded southeastern shoreline, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area's Yosemite Slough was once home to biologically rich tidal marshes and mudflats. Like so many parts of the bay, the waters of Yosemite Slough have been severely degraded by landfill, soil erosion, industrial contamination, wastewater overflows, and illegal dumping. This has adversely impacted the remaining habitat and wildlife, including the fisheries, and has complicated park planning and limited recreational opportunities. Today, only the channel at the end of Yosemite Avenue remains influenced by the tides.

Yet the tides will soon be turning for Yosemite Slough. A unique partnership between the California State Park Foundation (CSPF), California State Parks, and Bayview-Hunters Point youth empowerment organization Literacy for Environmental Justice have taken on an ambitious plan to restore the area and create San Francisco's largest contiguous wetland area.

The CSPF's Yosemite Slough Wetland Restoration Project at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area (SRA) will remediate and restore the degraded and inaccessible 34-acre portion of Candlestick Point SRA's northern shoreline. The project is presently in the permitting stage, and two-thirds of the \$12 million needed for the

YOSEMITE SLOUGH continued on page 4

Farallones Through the Decades

Golden Gate Audubon began as nature's presence was at a low ebb on the Farallon Islands. Until European explorers came, the 211 acres of scattered rocky islands were the undisturbed home of a dense population of seabirds, marine mammals, and flying invertebrates.

By 1917, when the Audubon Association of the Pacific (as GGA was initially called) was formed, the nesting bird populations were greatly reduced. Some native mammals had disappeared completely. What happened?

Native Americans feared the islands and stayed away. The first humans to set foot deliberately on the Farallones may have been Sir Francis Drake's crew. In 1579 his men hunted sea lions and collected seabird eggs, beginning a pattern of exploitation that would last for 400 years.

Sailing merchants wanted Northern Fur Seal pelts to trade in China. By 1810 hunters lived seasonally on the islands. That year, 30,000 fur seal hides were collected during a five-month season. In 1817 a permanent Russian hunting colony was established on Southeast Farallon Island. The highest fur seal kill—200,000—was probably 1834. Seabird eggs and seabird meat were collected and shipped north to the Russian post at Fort Ross. In 1828 approximately 50,000 Farallones seabirds were killed for food. The Russians left in 1841, just before the most profitable exploitation of the islands' wildlife.

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

The Gull – ISSN 0164-971X

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

Design and layout e.g. communications

Save the Date to Celebrate Golden Gate Audubon's 90th Anniversary



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON

Reaching the ripe age of 90 years—and still going strong—is no small feat for humans or organizations. This year, as Golden Gate Audubon crosses this milestone, we are planning a major celebration on October 11, 2007, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Pier 1 in San Francisco. And you're invited.

There will be plenty of delicious food and wine and lively conversation among old friends, new friends, local celebrities, and other guests. A fascinating display will highlight our major achievements over the years, and several individuals will be given awards for their outstanding contributions to Golden Gate Audubon.

A silent auction will feature such irresistible items as a weekend at an Inverness bed-and-breakfast, dinners at popular bistros and private homes, a private plane trip for lunch in Healdsburg, a rare bird print, and membership in the California Academy of Science. Topping off the evening will be a live auction of a weeklong trip to a fantastic birding resort in Costa Rica.

All this for tickets ranging from \$45 up to \$250 per person. Look for more details in coming issues of *The Gull* and for your personal invitation in the mail in late August. But mark your calendar *now* for Thursday, October 11.

If you are interested in being a sponsor of this gala event, want to reserve advance tickets, or need more information, contact Michael Martin at mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.7295.

Don't Miss the GGA Volunteer Party

Whether you came out for a habitat restoration workday or have led field trips for years, we want to express our gratitude for everything you've done to support Golden Gate Audubon and local wildlife. You and a guest are invited to join us at the annual Volunteer Thank-You Party on Sunday, May 6, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., at the Tern Picnic Area at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park in Oakland. Lunch will be served, and prizes will be awarded. There will also be bird walks at Arrowhead Marsh and the adjacent restored wetland. If you take BART, a free shuttle will provide transportation to and from the Oakland Airport/Coliseum station. To RSVP and sign up for the shuttle or obtain directions to the park, contact Michael Martin, Volunteer and Membership Development Coordinator, 510.843.7295 or mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org.

Remember to Vote for GGA Board Members

The 2007 annual election of Golden Gate Audubon Board Directors is being held by written ballots due on May 16, 2007. The two candidates for elected directors this year are Al Peters and Noreen Weeden. See the April *Gull* for more information on the candidates and a ballot form. The ballot form must be sent by mail to Golden Gate Audubon, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702.



GGA VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Saturday, May 12, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at the Presidio. Meet at the Natural Resources Field Office, 1539 Pershing Dr., San Francisco.

Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Creatures from the New Lagoon. Come enjoy bird walks, family activities, music, and storytellers. Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco. See related bird walks in the listing of field trips on page 7.

Wednesday, May 16, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at Harding Park. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd., San Francisco.

Saturday, May 19, 8:30 a.m. – noon

Presidio Bird Count, San Francisco. Working in small teams, you'll choose one of eight routes to observe and record approximately 20 species that indicate the health of the Presidio's bird habitat. Snacks and monitoring clipboards (with map route, bird visuals, and recording forms) provided. Meet on steps of the Crissy Field Center with binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, and a water bottle. RSVP if possible to Damien Raffa at 415.561.4449. GGA members Matt Zlatunich and Alan Hopkins developed this citizen-science-based monitoring protocol.

Saturday, June 9, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at the Presidio. Meet at the Natural Resources Field Office, 1539 Pershing Dr., San Francisco.

ALAMEDA'S LEAST TERNS NEED YOU MOST

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is initiating a volunteer monitoring program called Tern Watch for the 2007 California Least Tern breeding season from May 1 through mid or late August. Working in three- or four-hour shifts, the volunteers will monitor the terns at the former Naval Air Station from vehicles and document the activities of predators (mainly avian) in and around the colony.

Volunteers need to have their own vehicles, binoculars, sharp eyes, and good observational skills. Birding experience is preferred; a spotting scope with a window mount is helpful, but not essential. A commitment to a regular schedule will be required, and training and written instructions will be provided. While monitoring for predators, volunteers will be able to view some fascinating Least Tern behaviors that few birders get the chance to observe firsthand!

To join Tern Watch, email Susan Euing at susan_euing@yahoo.com with your contact information, birding experience, and availability. The following shifts will be scheduled: Monday–Saturday, 5–8 a.m., 2–5 p.m., and 5–8 p.m., and Sunday, 5–9 a.m., 9–1 p.m., 1–5 p.m., and 5–8 p.m. If you don't have email access, call Leora Feeney at 510.522.0601 and provide the same information.

PRESIDIO SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Curious about what science has revealed in recent years about the Presidio's ecology and heritage? A one-day Presidio Science Symposium, on May 11, will highlight research projects and studies representing archaeology, botany, wildlife, climate, soils, and water. Matt Zlatunich, a member of Golden Gate Audubon's San Francisco Conservation Committee, will give a presentation on Presidio Park-Wide Bird Monitoring. Short visits to project sites will follow the presentations. The event is at the Presidio's Golden Gate Club from 9 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. To register or for more information, contact 415.561.5333 or presidio@presidiotrust.gov. Lunch will be provided to registrants.

Heron Watch at Golden Gate Park

This year, the Great Blue Heron colony at Golden Gate Park's Stow Lake has at least six active nests, marking the 14th year that the herons have returned to the lake to court, mate, and raise their young. To date, the highly successful colony has fledged a total of 97 chicks.

You are invited to come out to the lake to observe the Great Blue Herons and their chicks. On Saturdays, May 5, 12, and 19, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., San Francisco Nature interns will be at the lake with spotting scopes to offer a close view of the magnificent birds. From 10:30 a.m. to noon, a naturalist will lead a walk around Stow Lake and Strawberry Island.

To find the heron watch location, follow the signs from the Stow Lake Boathouse. The free event is also sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon. For more information, visit www.sfnature.org or call 415.387.9160.



Great Blue Herons at Stow Lake.

Jim Sullivan

first of three phases has been raised. Total cost for the three phases, which will take place over a five-year period, is approximately \$20 million. Work is planned to begin later this year.

The Yosemite Slough restoration has a number of key components. After removal of debris and contaminated fill from the bay and removal of existing structures on the north side of the channel, the site will be graded and transformed into wetlands. The newly created wetlands and adjoining uplands will be revegetated with thousands of native plants, thus increasing local biodiversity. The creation of two islands for breeding shorebirds, isolated by a tidal

Working on the restoration project has made me feel that I have helped shape my neighborhood in a better way. I really feel a part of the community.

Jacquay Thomas, Bay Youth intern

channel, will protect nesters from both feral animals and human disturbance. By catching and filtering water, the restored wetlands will reduce the amount of polluted runoff.

The project also includes educational and recreational opportunities: a new interpretive center will feature displays and literature on the ecology of San Francisco Bay's intertidal zone, and a trail will connect the park to the Bay Trail, making it an integral part of the regional trail system and San Francisco's Blue Greenway.

In August 2004, CSPF in conjunction with community-based Literacy for Environmental Justice launched Bay Youth for the Environment, a unique science-based, afterschool work program for high school youth in Bayview-Hunters Point. Laying the groundwork for the Yosemite Slough restoration, the youth built a native plant nursery at the Candlestick Community Garden, which they maintain with the help of hundreds of volunteers. To date, more than 4,000 native plants have been propagated for the restoration project. The nursery has

I really enjoy working on the restoration project. It makes me feel like I'm not only helping to restore something that used to be beautiful, but it's also ensuring that this place will be beautiful for the future generations of Bayview to enjoy. It'll be a nice change in our community.

Connie Shahid, Bay Youth intern

also revitalized the function and aesthetics of the community garden.

Bay Youth for the Environment has many other benefits. Through the program, youth gain environmental knowledge, employment experience, and important life skills. "This job changed the way I talk to others, the way I act," says Elijah Lintz, Bay Youth intern. "It made me into a nice individual." At the same time, the youth supply a passionate voice for the conservation and restoration of the Bayview-Hunters Point shoreline as they build community support for the Yosemite Slough project and promote long-term community stewardship for Candlestick Point SRA. "I believe that what we're doing is important to our community," Bay Youth intern Connie Shahid says, "because I believe that what we're doing is creating a new start for Bayview-Hunters Point."

The Bay Youth add an important and sadly often overlooked voice in the environmental movement. Every March, the Bay Youth team travels to Sacramento for CSPF's Annual Park's Advocacy Day, an opportunity for concerned citizens to meet with legislators about the myriad issues

that affect state parks. This year Bay Youth advocated for more urban parks, better maintenance funding, conservation easements for parks, protection of historical and cultural treasures, and protection of state parks from development and road projects.

Recently, the Bay Youth team and Golden Gate Audubon's volunteer program have partnered to propagate over 1,000 native plants for the wetland restoration project at San Francisco's Pier 94. GGA volunteers have visited the Candlestick Community Garden to work alongside the Bay Youth interns to do something positive for the local shoreline. In an effort to increase the diversity and revegetation of Pier 94's wetland, GGA volunteers planted 500 donated wetland species—gumplant, alkali heath, marsh rosemary, seaside arrow grass, and sand spurrey—on April 21, Earth Day. The Bay Youth have also been successfully propagating the endangered sea-blite (*Suaeda californica*) found at Pier 94 in an effort to increase the plant's limited population along southeastern San Francisco.

We hope to continue this relationship, and we invite you to help us grow the 10,000 plants we need each year for the restoration of Yosemite Slough.

by Bay Youth interns
Elijah Lintz, Connie Shahid, and Jacquay Thomas,
with Patrick Rump,
Slough Youth Program Coordinator

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please join the Bay Youth team at our regular volunteer day on the first Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., at the Candlestick Community Garden and Native Plant Nursery, 1150 Carroll Avenue.

For more information about LEJ and the nursery, contact Patrick Rump at sloughyouth@lejyouth.org or visit www.lejyouth.org. For more information about the Yosemite Slough restoration or the Bay Youth for the Environment program, contact Cecille Caterson, Program Manager, at 415.258.9975 or cecille@calparks.org.



Connie Shahid (left) and Elijah Lintz planting natives at the Candlestick Community Garden.



SPEAKER SERIES

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m. At 7 p.m., delicious snacks are served by hospitality coordinator Susanne Shields. Speaker Series coordinator is Sarah Reed.

Coming and Going: Bay Bird Populations

Harry Fuller

Berkeley: Thursday, May 17

Over the past two centuries, Bay Area bird populations have been affected by many human-induced changes. Habitat destruction, introduced predators, urban sprawl, pollution, persecution, and introduced plants, as well as welcome conservation efforts, have



Len Blumin

The Greater Roadrunner, a bird driven from former habitats in San Jose, has accommodated itself to humans in lower density areas such as Panoche Valley, where this photograph was taken.

altered how Bay Area birds survive. Harry Fuller will look at these impacts and some of the likely effects of global warming and climate change. Some species, such as the Brown-headed Cowbird and Eurasian Collared-Dove, successfully invaded the Bay Area. Other species, such as the Common Raven and California Towhee, changed their habits to fit altered habitat. There are the happy back-from-the-brink stories of the Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, and Snowy Egret. Sadly, there are too many stories of threatened extirpation, from the Western Snowy Plover and California Least Tern to

San Francisco's Bank Swallows and California Quail. Harry will share some of the useful sources for data on bird populations.

Harry Fuller is a San Francisco birder, a Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader, and a birding guide. His website, www.towhee.net, has a section devoted to ornithological history. He has contributed several articles on birding history to the *Gull*, including the story on the Farallon Islands in this issue.

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).
Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

Who's Taking Care of the Golden Gate?

Amy Meyer

San Francisco: Tuesday, May 22

In the early 1970s the U.S. Army began to sell off its land at the Golden Gate. In response, citizens organized People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area to garner support for a national park. Thanks to these efforts and those of many other advocates, Congress established a park that now encompasses 80,000 acres. Amy Meyer will tell the story of how the Golden Gate National Recreation Area came to be and will show how preserving the environment depends on caring citizens and an enlightened government.

When Amy realized that people were forgetting this story of democracy in action, or had never heard it, she wrote *New Guardians for the Golden Gate: How America Got a Great National Park* (copies of the book will be available at the program). Amy is co-chair of People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area. She has also served on the GGNRA/Point Reyes advisory commission and the Presidio Trust board.

County Fair Building, San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.
Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html

Creative Sessions with Photographer Art Wolfe

Over his 30-year career, Art Wolfe has worked on every continent recording the world's fast-disappearing wildlife, landscapes, and native cultures. His stunning and inspiring photographs are recognized throughout the world for their mastery of color, composition, and perspective.

Now you can expand your knowledge and achieve your photographic goals by attending Art's Creative Sessions Tour, a series of compelling multimedia lectures. The series, held at the Yerba Buena Center in San Francisco over Memorial Day weekend, begins with a lecture on Friday, May 25, and continues with a two-day intensive program, May 26 and 27, on the Art of Seeing. Workshop topics include composition, color, and practical tips, along with question-and-answer periods. Hundreds of images and video clips will accompany the presentations. Art will be joined by Rick Holt, founder of Digital Darkroom Workshops. Rick will present the latest trends in image editing and archiving, including Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop CS3.

Golden Gate Audubon is cosponsoring the Creative Sessions Tour, and Art Wolfe is offering a 10 percent discount to Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Members who attend the workshops. To register, go to www.artwolfe.com and enter code "SFGGAM" in the box for discounted tickets.

We also need volunteers to help out at the event on Saturday and Sunday. All volunteers get free admission to the workshops. Please contact Michael Martin at 510.843.7295 or mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org to volunteer.



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake in Tilden Park

Berkeley

Friday, May 4, 8:30 – 11 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

Meet at parking lot at north end of Central Park Dr. for a walk around this lush riparian corridor to see breeding birds that have arrived. Some—Black-headed Grosbeaks, Wilson's Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Swanson's Thrushes—will be singing. A surprise visit with William Gilbert, PhD, who has banded Wilson's Warblers in this location for many years, is a possibility. Rain cancels.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden docent, 415.387.9160

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Trip is cosponsored by Botanical Garden, SF Nature Education, and GGA.

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Contra Costa County

Saturday, May 5, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Malcolm Sproul, 925.376.8945

Meet by Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. in El Cerrito, next to tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Day Rd. We'll drive to trailhead on Rifle Range Rd., then walk a hilly transect of the canyon to bird brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian streamsides, and grasslands. This is the 28th year of Malcolm's 6-mile Wildcat Canyon hike. Bring lunch and liquids.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Sunday May 6, 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Allan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net, and Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny

Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at front gate of garden, 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way. The garden's microhabitats attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This monthly trip is oriented toward helping beginning birders develop their skills in spotting and identifying the garden's birds.

Tilden Regional Park

Berkeley

Sunday May 6, 9 a.m. – noon

Lewis Cooper, 510.526.1773,
lbcpr@earthlink.net

Enter park from Canyon Dr. (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.), or Shasta Rd. off Grizzly Peak Blvd. and follow signs to the Nature Center. We'll visit various areas, including Jewel Lake, looking for Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Warbling Vireos and House Wrens should be singing. Heavy rain cancels.

Alcatraz Island

Thursday, May 10, 9:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Christian Hellwig, christian_hellwig@nps.gov; Bob Lewis, 510.854.5001,
RLewis0727@aol.com

This monthly trip is offered exclusively to GGA Supporting members and is limited to 10 participants. At this time of the year, expect to see many nesting birds, including Western Gulls, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Brandt's Cormorants, and egrets. Reserve by contacting Tara Zuardo, GGA office manager, at 510.843.2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Once you have received confirmation, book your space on the ferry with Alcatraz Cruises at 415.981.7625 or at www.alcatrazcruises.com. Buy a ticket (\$21.75) for the 9:30 a.m. Early Bird Tour. The ferry departs from Pier 33, near the corner of Bay St. and the Embarcadero. Field trip is timed so you



Wilson's Warbler.

Bob Lewis

can return on the 11:15 a.m. boat, arriving Pier 33 at 11:30.

To reach Pier 33 using transit, take the F streetcar, adjacent to the Ferry Building, or the No. 10 Muni bus (fare: \$1.50). If you are arriving on BART, exit at the Embarcadero Station and board the F streetcar. If you are driving, parking is available at the lot across the street from Pier 33 (early bird available) and other area garages.

Quarry Lakes, Alameda Creek, Coyote Hills

Fremont

Saturday, May 12, 8:20 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,
Kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet on east side of Fremont BART station at Tule Pond, adjacent to parking lot. This is one of our most popular trips. On previous trips, we have seen 50 to 60 species, beginning from the time we step off the BART train. Species vary according to season. On this trip, we hope to see breeding swallows. We'll visit riparian, marsh, and bayside habitats over a total distance of about 24 miles, mostly on paved bike trails, with very little uphill. Bring lunch and liquids for a picnic at Coyote Hills Visitor Center. Bicycle helmet required. Dress for variable weather. Rain cancels. Reservations not necessary, but an email or phone call is appreciated.

Transit: Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 7:34 a.m. Allow time to process your ticket and get your bike to platform. **Car:** Take I-880 to Fremont. Exit on Mowry Ave. east toward central Fremont. Go 2.3 miles on Mowry to Fremont BART parking lot on east side of station past Civic Center.

Birding by Ear

Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Sunday, May 13, 8 a.m. – noon

Denise Wight, 510.547.6822 (w),
925.377.0951 (h), blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Use Redwood Gate entrance near Redwood Rd. and Pinehurst Rd. Meet at Canyon Meadow in farthest parking lot at end of road. We should hear singing Winter Wrens, Black-headed Grosbeaks, various sparrows, Brown Creepers, and other breeding birds. Entrance fee is \$5.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, May 18, 8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Lewis Ellingham; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, 415.554.9600, ext. 16, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, off Roosevelt. We'll enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hill-top scrub and south cliff.

Mitchell Canyon

Contra Costa County

Saturday, May 19, 8:30 a.m.

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.316.8932,
seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Meet at parking lot for half-day trip. A variety of passerines and raptors are drawn to this dry valley climate. Past highlights include nesting Western Wood-Pewee, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Cooper's Hawk, as well as Golden Eagle, Phainopepla, and Lazuli Bunting. Bring liquids, snacks, and sunscreen. Wear good walking shoes.

Take Hwy. 24 east through Caldecott Tunnel to Walnut Creek. Exit Ygnacio Valley Rd. Go about 8 miles; turn right on Clayton Rd. After 1 mile, turn right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. Follow to end into lot. Entrance fee is \$6 (under age 62) or \$5 (over 62).

Merrie Way

San Francisco

Sunday, May 20, 8 a.m.

Harry Fuller, 415.344.2363,
anzatowhee@yahoo.com

Meet at Merrie Way, the unpaved parking lot at west end of Pt. Lobos above Cliff House at Land's End. Local breeding birds will be nesting, and there should be plenty of birdsongs to practice birding by ear. Cormorants, gulls, and oystercatchers may be nesting on Seal Rock. We will look for woodland nesters near Chain of Lakes. Email leader for transit information.

Presidio

San Francisco

Sunday, May 20, 7:30 a.m. – noon

Andy Kleinhesselink, 415.517.1725,
andy_kleinhesselink@hotmail.com

Meet at Crissy Field Center Parking lot at 603 Mason St. (Mason and Halleck). We'll focus on restoration sites in the Presidio, which provide amazing habitat for breeding birds, and we'll discuss how concerns for bird habitat inform the restoration process. We'll visit several different sites, including Crissy Field Marsh, Lobos Dunes, and Presidio Hills, and some sites that will be restored in the near future. We should see several species that nest in these sites, including, Bushtit, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-crowned Sparrow, and less common species such as Swainson's Thrush.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Hayward

Wednesday, May 23, 9 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Meet at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. We will bird area near center, then go down to lake toward Embarcadero, or up path to Children's Fairyland.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. The best parking is in boat-house lot near the Nature Center. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free during the week.

Garin Regional Park

Hayward

Saturday, May 26, 8 a.m.

Anne Hoff, 510.845.5908,
Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Meet in parking lot. The park offers a delightful riparian corridor where Yellow and Wilson's Warblers, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Western Bluebirds, and Bullock's Orioles may be seen and heard at close range. We'll visit grassy hillsides, which attract raptors, and a small pond. Bring liquids.

Take I-580 to Foothill Blvd./Rt. 238 exit in Hayward. Continue 1.5 miles on Foothill to major arterial division. Veer left to continue on Mission Blvd./238. In 2.5 miles, turn left onto Garin Ave. Follow uphill to parking lots. Meet in area farthest to left (north). Alternatively, take I-880 and exit at Industrial Blvd. from either north or south. Turn right at T intersection with Mission, and turn left up the hill on Garin.

Palace of Fine Arts Lagoon

San Francisco

Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

As part of a special event, Creatures of the New Lagoon: Discover the Wild Side of the Palace of Fine Arts, Golden Gate Audubon field trip leaders are offering four bird walks to see the diverse birdlife in the freshwater lagoon: 10.30 a.m. with Harry Fuller; 11.30 a.m. with Joan Zawaski; 12.30 p.m. with Hilary Powers; and 1.30 p.m. with Pamela Llewellyn. The event seeks to expand Bay Area residents' understanding of the lagoon as a significant environmental resource. The lagoon was originally part of an ancient tidal wetland that extended from the present tidal pool at the Presidio's Crissy Field to an outlet near what is now Divisadero Street. Although much of the wetland was filled as the city expanded, the lagoon currently serves as a dynamic link with Alcatraz Island. During the day, Great Blue Herons and egrets fly to the lagoon from Alcatraz to feed. At night, they return to roost. Black-crowned Night-Herons do the reverse, flying from the lagoon to Alcatraz during the day to feed and back to the lagoon at night to rest. For further information, contact Michael Martin, GGA Volunteer and Membership Development Coordinator, at mmartin@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.7295.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Shasta County

Friday – Sunday, June 22 – 24

Dan Murphy, 415.564.0074,
murphsf@comcast.net

Join Dan and Joan Murphy for the annual Lassen field trip. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake Campground—loops A and C by reservation only, loops B and D on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations can be made online at www.recreation.gov or by calling 877.444.6777. Those planning on staying at Hat Creek Resort in Old Station should call 800.568.0109. Trip details will be in the Summer Gull.

Farallon Islands

Sunday, August 5

Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983,
ash@sfo.com

We will depart from Sausalito at 7:30 a.m. aboard the *Salty Lady* for an 8-hour adventure to the Farallones and beyond. The Farallones are the most reliable place to view Tufted Puffins and other alcid.

After visiting islands, weather permitting, we will continue west to the Continental Shelf to look for deep-water species like Black-footed Albatross and Blue Whale. Last year's trip sold out early!

Cost of the trip is \$100 for Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Members and \$125 for nonmembers. To register, send a check for the trip to Shearwater Journeys, PO Box 190, Hollister CA 95024 (no

refunds). Along with your payment also include the date of your trip, noting that you are a GGA member. Also provide a phone number and email address (if available) for each member of your party and a self-addressed stamped envelope. A small fuel surcharge may be required the day of the trip. More trip details will be mailed upon payment. For more information, call trip leader.



Northern Fur Seal, one of the marine mammals seen at the Farallon Islands.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

GOLDEN EAGLE (\$1000 AND MORE)

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Regina Phelps, Jay & Lisa Pierrepont, Anne B. & Boyard Rowe, Ruth & Alan Tobey (*Tobey Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund & Copper Canyon Trip*)

LEAST TERN (\$200 TO \$499)

Mary C. Betlach, Tomas Latham, Steven G. & Renee Margolin

CLAPPER RAIL (\$100 TO \$199)

Mr. & Mrs. John T. Anderson, Aquarium of the Bay, Patricia Bacchetti, Richard Bachenheimer, Ronald & Viola Saima Barklow (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Darryl K. Beach, Bell-Carter Foods Inc., Rolf & Gail Bergeler (*Churchill Trip*), Robert & Barbara Brandriff, Judith Breen (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Michael J. Butler, Mary Cantrell, James W. Clarke, Grange S. Coffin, John H. Conley, Jacqueline Craig, Susan Diridoni & Satoru Fujii, Ruth Doell (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Judith L. Dunham (*Churchill Trip*), Caroline A. Erickson, Deborah Ann Farson, James Ashley Ferry, Judith A. Fortney & Richard Spight, Constance Fraser (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Janice Gonsalves, Cynthia M. Grubb, Thomas A. Holt, Christopher James & Anne Whaling, Katherine & Blair Jarrett, Miriam Jocelyn (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Suzanne Jones & Robert Elia, Edmund C. Levin, Robert A. Lewis (*Copper Canyon*), Bruce Mast, John & Valerie Matzger, William B. McCoy, Helen L. McKinley, Neville Morcom (*United Way of Lane County*), Cordelia Neal, Angus M. Parker, Bill Pinkham & Wanda Mar, Lindsay C. Ralphs, Rosemary Rogers, Pepi Ross, Carla Rugeroni, Joshua Rupright, Diane Scarritt (*Copper Canyon Trip*), Arthur Slater, Elizabeth Sojourner (*Copper Canyon Trip*), John V. Sudall, Jean C. Thomas (*Copper Canyon*), Yulling Tsai, Mary L. Turner & Norma Randig, Thomas J. & Janice Vargo, Ed Walker (*Churchill Trip*), Anne N. Walther, Eric J. Wells, Natalie A. White (*Churchill Trip*), Barbara H. Wilson & Milton Wilson Jr., Victor K & Brenda Wong (*Churchill Trip*), Shirley A. Woo & David A. Rosenfeld, Bob & Betty Wotton (*Copper Canyon*)

GIFTS (TO \$99)

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IN KIND

Binoculars: Caroline H. Kim, Victor K. & Brenda Wong
Birds of the Pacific States book: Helen Fisher

GRANTS

The Clorox Company Foundation: Eco-Oakland Program
LEF Foundation: Birds of Heron's Head Park Project



For the most part, birders had to wander far afield to find true rarities in March. Out-of-area highlights included Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) and Horned Puffin in Santa Cruz (SCZ); Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) at Humboldt Bay (HUM); Laughing Gull in DN; and Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*) in MTY and HUM. Closer to home, birders marked the departure of winter visitors and celebrated the arrival of summer birds, but rarities consisted mostly of winter leftovers.

LOONS TO DUCKS

Through Mar. 11, a continuing Red-necked Grebe sported fresh breeding plumage at Shadow Cliffs Park in Pleasanton, ALA (mob). A 2nd Grebe was reported on the 16th at Pigeon Pt., SM (RT). A possible Sooty Shearwater made a rare foray into SF Bay on the 12th, attracting a birder's attention at Hayward RS, ALA (BR). A Mar. 16 sea watch from Pigeon Pt., SM, logged a Black-vented Shearwater (RT). A few lingering Greater White-fronted, Snow, Ross's, and Cackling Geese remained in the region. Harlequin Duck pairs were observed on the 2nd at Pigeon Pt., SM (RT) and on the 25th at Mori Pt. in Pacifica, SM (MB), along with continuing Harleys at Pt. San Quentin and Tomales Bay (MRN) and Heron Head (SF). On the 4th, a Long-tailed Duck was on the water but not on the menu at Scoma's Restaurant in Sausalito, MRN (CP). Another Long-tailed turned up at Pigeon Pt., SM on the 11th (PJM).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A Swainson's Hawk returned from the Argentine pampas to Ed Levin Park, SCL, on the 23rd (MR). Winter raptor reports continued through mid-March for Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Merlins, and Peregrine and Prairie Falcons. A Mar. 11 field trip to King Ridge Rd. in northern SON documented a Sooty Grouse, until recently considered a Blue Grouse subspecies (LH; mob). Black Rails were reported on the 9th at Coyote Hills RP, ALA (JD) and on the 13th at Benicia



Yellow-headed Blackbird.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

State Recreation Area, SOL (EP). A handful of Pacific Golden-Plovers lingered at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, Mar. 12-31 (RS). A Mar. 18 visitor to Las Positas Arroyo in Pleasanton, ALA, discovered a Solitary Sandpiper (RC).

Pomarine Jaegers were observed from the SM and SF coasts on the 16th and 21st (RT, BF, JY). Between the 9th and 22nd, an unusual gull at Lucchesi Park in Petaluma, SON, gave gull watchers an opportunity to sharpen their ID skills. Birders debated the fine points of Mongolian versus Vega Herring Gull, with conventional wisdom eventually favoring the latter (RS, BS, KR; mob). Up to 4 Slaty-backed Gulls (*Larus schistisagus*) remained with the gull flock at

Venice SB, SM, through the 22nd (mob). A Slaty-backed Gull was also reported with the Laughing Gull and others in DN, adding further intrigue to this phenomenon. Glaucous Gulls were reported from 8 locations. Black-legged Kittiwake movement past Pigeon Pt., SM, totaled 122 on the 16th and 250+ on the 24th (RT, EDB). The March 24th sea watch also documented an early Sabine's Gull (EDB).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker plied his trade in the cypress trees at Lobos Cr. in the Presidio (SF) Mar. 3-13 (JC; mob). A couple returning Bank Swallows soared over City of Hayward Ponds, ALA, on the 26th (BR) and a Mountain Bluebird visited the coast at Half Moon Bay, SM, on the 6th (PC). Winter lingerers included a Short-eared Owl at Byxbee Park, SCL; the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near Ed Levin Park, SCL; and the Townsend's Solitaire on Geary Rd., ALA.

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler activity was limited to a handful of lingering Palm Warblers, along with a Black-and-white Warbler and American Redstart in SF. By the 31st, 4 Sage Sparrows were back on their song posts at Mt. Diablo SP, CC (DW). The Lark Bunting remained at the Byron Airport, CC, and was joined by a Lapland Longspur on the 9th (DNo). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak remained in Moss Beach, SM, through the 15th (MD). Finally, a Yellow-headed Blackbird was a Mar. 26 visitor to the City of Hayward Ponds, ALA (BR).

See Birding Resources at www.golden-gate-audubon.org for complete sightings data.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

Abbreviations for Observers: BF, Brian Fitch; BR, Bob Richmond; BS, Brian Sullivan; CP, Carmen Perry; DNo, Dick Norton; DW, Denise Wright; EDB, Ed DeBellevue; EP, Eric Pilotte; JC, Josiah Clark; JD, Joe Devine; JY, Jason Yakich; KR, Ken Rosenberg; LB, Leonie Batkin; LH, Lisa Hug; MB, Michelle Brodie; MD, Marty Devine; MF, Mike Feighner; MR, Mike Rogers; PC, Pixie Couch; PJM, Peter J. Metropoulos; RC, Richard Cimino; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DN, Del Norte; HUM, Humboldt; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; MTY, Monterey; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve.

After the Gold Rush, fresh eggs were in demand. California had no poultry industry so commercial egging struck the Farallon Islands. In 1854 over half a million seabird eggs were gathered for sale to San Francisco restaurants. Only the Western Gull eggs were avoided as their thin shells would not survive the ocean passage. Some eggers also avoided disturbing the nests of Tufted Puffins because of the birds' ferocious bite. Common Murre, all cormorant species, and other birds that nested in the open were easy targets.

Compounding the damage to wildlife was the construction of the first lighthouse, begun in 1852. That brought permanent residents with pets, goats, and, worst of all, Australian hares that were freed on the island. The habitat rapidly disintegrated, the fur seals and elephant seals were wiped out, and even sea lions and harbor seals were at a low number by the end of the 19th century. Seabird populations were extirpated or left with tiny colonies. Even the nesting ravens on Southeast Farallon had been shot. In 1896, the last year of commercial egging on the islands, only 100,000 could be found. Yet residents continued to gather eggs until 1905.

The earliest conservation efforts to protect the Farallones had been led by the California Academy of Sciences, but the arrival of the Audubon Association coincided with one of the worst threats ever to



Common Murres.

face Farallon seabirds.

The spread of automobiles increased the oceanic transport of petroleum. Before entering San Francisco Bay, tankers would empty their ballast tanks in the vicinity of the Farallon Islands. Currents brought the slick of waste oil to the islands, where it covered the shores and killed many of the remaining seabirds and mammals. Concerned lighthouse officials contacted the fledgling association. In a letter dated March 21, 1917, Inspector H. W. Rhodes of the 18th Lighthouse District, wrote to Carlos B. Lastreto, the Audubon Association's first president: "The keeper of the Farallon Light Station has reported that in his opinion if vessels are not prohibited from pumping overboard crude oil with their water ballast in the vicinity of the Farallon Islands, all diving birds of the island, such as murres, will disappear. He further states that during the last nesting season all of the birds from some of the rookeries were killed, most of them dying on the rocks after being saturated with oil. This loss is not confined to the nesting season, as many of the birds remaining on the island have died from the same cause during the past winter."

The association was less than three months old, but it was ready to embark on its first serious effort at conservation. Lastreto and Dr. Barton Evermann, a prominent ichthyologist and director of the California Academy of Sciences, worked as a committee of two, trying to curb the dumping of waste oil. Evermann was also president

of the Cooper Ornithological Club at that time. In 1917 the U.S. territorial limit was only three miles so there was no hope of government intervention in stopping ships from dumping oil 20 miles or more out to sea. The committee got support from the California Fish and Game Department, the Pacific Fisheries Society, and the Cooper Club. They did convince the major oil companies along the Pacific Coast to begin recycling waste oil at onshore facilities, instead of dumping at sea. Lastreto also conducted a survey of harbors around the Pacific to find if oil dumping was a widespread problem. These actions were a crucial early step in protecting the Farallones and were probably among the first organized conservation efforts to stop oil dumping at sea.

Once oil dumping was reduced, other problems such as gill-netting and overfishing continued to damage Farallon wildlife. According to a report in the August 1930 *Gull*, a field trip to the Farallones held a shocking disappointment for the association members who went: Only four Common Murres could be found. Western Gulls were abundant, and the only land birds were Rock Wren and House Sparrow.

Bird populations were slow to recover in the mid-20th century. By 1959 the Common Murre population was still only 6,000 breeding birds. Until the recent effects of climate change, there had been a series of optimistic milestones: Rhinoceros Auklets resumed breeding in 1972 and elephant



Tufted Puffin.

Audubon's First Leader

By the time that Carlos B. Lastreto cofounded the Audubon Association of the Pacific in January 1917, he was a successful merchant living full-time in the Bay Area. Although he was born on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, he spent many years in Peru and Nicaragua and continued to travel to Latin America throughout his life. His business, C. B. Lastreto & Co. in San Francisco, specialized in the importation of coffee. His parents had come to San Francisco during the Gold Rush. The family was of French and Italian ancestry, according to his obituary.

In 1896 Lastreto was returning to San Francisco from Central America aboard the steamship *Columbia*. On July 14 the ship neared Pigeon Point in heavy summer fog. The captain later said he got confused between the foghorns at Año Nuevo and Pigeon Point. The *Columbia* ran aground on rocks off Pigeon Point. Lastreto was sent to shore with a local fisherman to cable for help. All the passengers were rescued safely, but for months afterward, bottles of olive oil from the cargo hold washed ashore. Thus ended the most trying of Lastreto's many trips to Latin America. The night before Lastreto boarded the ship, his hotel had burned and destroyed his money, papers, and clothes. A dress suit survived in a small trunk that he had checked at the wharf. So for the entire trip north, he had only the pajamas he'd worn when the hotel burned and his dress suit.

By 1912 Lastreto was successful enough to live in Atherton, where he bought a house at 102 Isabella Avenue. He resided there the rest of his life and almost daily commuted to his business in San Francisco. He was an active Boy Scout leader and participated in the Commonwealth Club and the American Meteorological Society. In addition to cofounding the Audubon Association, he was its first president and later served for years as corresponding secretary.

According to his obituary, Lastreto was an inveterate writer of letters to the editor. Lastreto's first act upon becoming Audubon Association president was to inquire about bird deaths caused by the many lighthouses along the Pacific Coast. Perhaps this was brought on his personal experiences as a frequent ocean traveler. In keeping with Lastreto's systematic approach, he drew up a questionnaire and sent one to each lighthouse keeper. The responses indicated that birds were not colliding with lighthouses and being killed. But the questionnaire did bring results when the lighthouse keeper at the Farallones reported recurrent oil spills.

FARALLONES from page 10

seals in 1973. The last feral rabbit was killed in 1975. By 1980 there were around 60,000 Common Murres breeding on the islands. In 1996 the first Northern Fur Seal was born on the islands after the species had been extirpated, and 10 years later there were 80 pups. By January 2007, the elephant seal colony already boasted over 70 pups for the current breeding season.

Yet the Farallon Islands are not isolated from global changes. The last two summers have seen little of the usual nutrient-rich ocean upwelling on which the island's seabirds depend. In 2005 and 2006, no Cassin's Auklet chicks fledged on the Farallones. This could be disastrous for a seabird whose life span may not exceed six years. For Golden Gate Audubon members today, we can best help the Farallones by

supporting the overall environmental health of the planet.

by Harry Fuller

This is one of a series of articles by Harry Fuller on topics related to Golden Gate Audubon's 90th anniversary. Harry Fuller is a professional birding guide and also a longtime Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader and instructor. His website (www.towhee.net) contains a wealth of information on his trips and classes, on birding in the Bay Area and beyond, and on western ornithological history.



Carlos B. Lastreto, Golden Gate Audubon's first president.

Courtesy of the California Academy of Sciences



BIRDING CLASSES

Three GGA-sponsored classes are offered through Albany Adult School. Register online at www.albany.k12.ca.us/adult/birding.html or by calling 510.559.6580.

Wild Butterflies in the City and the Sticks

Eilly Levinson

Wednesdays, June 13 – 27, 7:30 – 9 p.m., with three field trips on the Saturday following each class

Exclusive video will reveal rarely seen details of the life cycle of butterflies. The class will also cover identification, butterfly gardening, and caterpillar rearing. On field trips, participants will look for field marks, behavior, and favored plants. Contact the instructor at sal.levinson@gmail.com or go to www.butterflygardener.com for more information.

Birding Basics

Eddie Bartley

Tuesdays, June 26 – July 24, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus five field trips on the Saturday following each class

Designed for beginning birders, the class is modeled after David Allen Sibley's *Birding Basics*, which would be useful to own as a textbook. It will cover bird behavior, identification, physiology, and taxonomy, as well as use of equipment and birding hot spots. Contact the instructor at eddie@naturetrip.com or go to www.naturetrip.com/GGASClasses.html for more details.

Birds and Butterflies—Easy Garden Enchantment

Corinne Greenberg

Mondays, July 9 – 30, 7 – 9 p.m., with one Saturday field trip

Set out a welcome for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial critters, and become captivated by the beauty of native California plants as you learn year-round ecological gardening. Gorgeous slide shows, environmental and natural history, and easy garden management lessons will help you create an enchanting wildlife habitat. The field trip will be held on Saturday, July 28, 8:45 – 10:45 a.m. Materials fee is \$5, payable to instructor. For more details, go to www.thegardenisateacher.com.

Summer in the Sierra

A few spaces may still be available in the popular class *Birds of the Sierra*, held in the Yuba Pass area, between Sierra City and Sierraville. Both sessions of the class will include field trips to different habitats in Sierra Valley and its surroundings to study such Sierra specialties as Swainson's Hawk, White-headed and Lewis's Woodpeckers, Calliope Hummingbird, *Empidonax* flycatchers, Mountain Bluebird, MacGillivray's and Hermit Warblers, and Brewer's and Vesper Sparrows.

Birds of the Sierra I, taught by Rusty Scalf and Bob Lewis, meets Thursday–Sunday, June 7–10. **Birds of the Sierra II**, taught by Eddie Bartley and Bob Lewis, meets Thursday–Sunday, June 14–17. Each class is limited to 35 people. The \$75 fee includes a lecture and dinner at San Francisco State University's Sierra Campus. Enrollees pay for room and other meals. The classes fill early, so call the Golden Gate Audubon office at 510.843.2222 to sign up.

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